

THE LOST MINE.

BY MRS. CARRIE L. MARSHALL.



Ewere very poor. The farm was mortgaged, and, try as we might, we never seemed able to catch up. As father grimly said: "We are always just one train behind time." And it seemed to be the great

effort of our lives to overtake this train, with, year by year, less prospect of doing so. It couldn't be helped; we all worked hard, even down to pretty light-hearted Rose, who was fast losing the delicate bloom and roundness which had made her name so appropriate; but the sterile stony jumble of hills and hollows which constituted the bulk of our farm could hardly be made to pay running expenses, let alone paying off the mortgage which hung like a heavy nightmare over our spirits. Perhaps it would not have made so much difference to Rose and me if we had lost the place, though we had been bred in the belief that no other spot on the green earth was quite so charming as this one. But we had traveled, having once been quite beyond the limits of our county, and even the eye of affection could not be absolutely blind to the fact that there were farms which showed every sign of being more fertile and profitable than ours. Father glared at me over his spectacles, and turned away in speechless contempt, when, after our return, I ventured to intimate as much to him. Even mother, whom I usually found to be a sympathetic listener, remarked that: "A fool is never quite a fool until he has traveled." I was too young then to appreciate at its true value this clinging loyalty to the old homestead, and was impatient of a sentiment which I now know to have been both rare and beautiful, though it was expressed in a somewhat intolerant manner. My father had been born and raised there, and had hardly passed a night of the many nights of his long life under any other roof. The place had belonged to his father and grandfather before him. No wonder it was dear to him! But the little ray of doubt which had crept into my mind, as to its being the nonpareil of the universe, grew and spread so fast that, little more than a year afterward, I was bidding good-

bye to father, mother, and Rose, bound for the silver-mines of Colorado, where I intended to pick up a fortune in a few weeks; and, with a trifle of the riches which I should have at my command, I would pay off the mortgage—due in a very few months now—then I would build a beautiful house for father and mother, and they should know no more want or trouble. So, in the bright unselfish dreams of youth, I had mapped out the future, and felt that I had only to go buoyantly forth and clasp hands with good-fortune. But father, as usual, lacked faith. "Arthur, my boy," he said, "you may need more money than you have. I hate to see you going so far away so scantily supplied. I won't say anything more about your going. I've said all I need to about that, and you still think it best to go. Here is something we have saved up, you know what for; but my boy is dearer to me than my farm, and it may be that you'll see the day that you'll suffer for just the little that you didn't take, if we keep it; and, if you do have such wonderful luck as you expect"—a glimmer of hopefulness asserting itself—"why, the money's as safe with you as it would be in the bank." He handed me two hundred dollars. The mortgage amounted to two thousand, and it hurt me to think how little we had laid up against the day of payment, and how big an inroad this two hundred would make in it. I tried to refuse, but father pressed it upon me so firmly that I finally went away with it in my pocket—carrying, besides, a picture in my memory, which years and change have never dimmed or altered in the least. I can close my eyes now and see it as plainly as I saw it then. An old couple, with furrowed anxious faces and hair just lightly touched with the white frost of life's sunset, framed in rustling green leaves and blossoming vines, standing watching the stage as it bore away their only son. I can hear the loud out-of-season notes of the robin which was singing in the clump of lilacs by the well, and smell the fragrance of the purple blossoms which surrounded the unseen singer. How often, since then, the song of a robin has overcome me with a rush of sudden unutterable homesick longing!

Fortune did not come bounding to meet me in the new country: but hard work, poverty, and

disenchantment did. Father's two hundred were spent long before I had found even a "pay-streak" of any kind of luck, and then— The mortgage was foreclosed, and I simply could not go back. I think now that it was wrong to keep away from them in their bitter trouble. Indeed, I thought so then; but my hands were empty. What could I do?

Sister Rose had married a good fellow, and "forehanded," as they say back there, and he gladly gave our parents a home with him. But there was only one spot on earth which could ever seem like home to them, and that, I was resolved, should be theirs once more, if I could only find the mine I lost. I went about prospecting with practical miners for nearly three years after I went West. Then I put in a year, studying assaying and the formation of rocks "dips," "leads," "inclines," and all that rubbish, when I took the field again, as fully qualified to find a rich mine as the next fellow. But I didn't find it; and neither, in nine cases out of ten, did he. So another year slipped away. Of course, I often found "indications," but they never went much beyond that, and the autumn of '85 found me up in the Green Horn range, nearly dead-broke, and more nearly discouraged with the endless useless quest for gold. I had nearly made up my mind to give it all up and go back as soon as the winter set in. Tom Burns was with me; he had been my partner in misfortune—we never had much of anything else—for nearly two years. We had drifted down from near Rosita, where we had been prospecting for the greater part of the summer, intent on making Pueblo before the wild deep snowfalls, which come early in these regions and stay late, should obliterate the cattle-trails which we usually followed, and make traveling almost impossible; but the evening of the second day brought us to the head of the San Carlos Cañon, and we found a deep pool just "wuckin' alive," as Tom declared in Missouri vernacular, with trout. They were irresistible; so we pitched our tent, unpacked our burros, four in number, and decided to camp there for the night, though it was then but little past noon. There seemed no occasion for the burros to stray away, so we turned them out without hobbling, and devoted ourselves to the trout. They were shy, it being so late in the season, and, becoming absorbed in the sport, we paid no attention to our pack-train. But who can read aright the heart of a mule, or who fathom the fell designs which may be lurking there, even while he gazes in your face trustfully, innocently, the picture of mulish simplicity and resignation? When we awoke in

the morning, not a burro was in sight. We ran up and down the narrow rock-walled valley, calling and listening by turns for old Jim's responsive bray! But it did not come, and the entire morning passed. Meanwhile, some of the higher peaks appeared to be signaling to each other by means of certain elusive vanishing cloud-penons, which they seemed to wave at each other and then to withdraw. We would be looking upward at some boldly jutting crag, when all at once a faint misty shadow would come stealing softly over it, clinging lightly to the rock a moment, and then as swiftly disappearing. From the cañon below us, the cloud-vapor arose in a steady stream, constantly increasing in volume. "Old Storm-King has set his kettle on to boil, down there," said Tom. "I wish we could find those blasted donkeys. If we don't get out of this pretty soon, we may not get out at all."

At noon, we put some crackers and cheese in our pockets, and started out for a more systematic search—Tom going back on the trail we had come over, and I following down the valley. I found a cattle-trail, pretty good at first, but after awhile the valley grew so narrow that it seemed only a gigantic crack in the rocks, with a stream running at the bottom; but the cattle-path kept on, literally clinging to the face of the rock. "I wonder," I thought, "with the whole mountain-range to choose from, why any sane cow should take such a pathway as this. There isn't soil enough even to leave a track in!" But I followed on grumbly, fully expecting to come upon the burros at any minute. I knew that they would enjoy leading me such a chase, and thought it not unlikely that they had slipped away with just this end in view.

I must have gone a couple of miles, when the path suddenly opened out on a green little nook, bright with the changing shadow and sunshine which shifted down through the branches of a group of silver-blue spruce, those majestic monarchs of the mountain solitudes, and there, daintily cropping the tender grass, I saw, not the missing pack-train, but a half-dozen magnificent elks. I was so completely astonished that I stood staring at them, forgetful of the gun at my shoulder, until some slight involuntary movement of mine sent a bit of rock rolling down the cliff. The leader, a royal old fellow, with antlers which I might have walked between with outstretched hands and still left untouched, raised his head, gave one startled glance around, and, with a snort and a clatter of hoofs, he wheeled and went down the cañon,

followed by the whole squad. Their gait looked clumsy, and, when I recovered my wits, I thought it would be an easy matter to overtake them; but I soon got a pretty accurate idea of the rate at which their swinging loose-jointed mode of locomotion took them out of gunshot-range. Rose and I used to sing a little song, wherein, among other handsome offers to the beloved and apparently obdurate maid, the lover declares:

"I'll chase the antelope over the plain." And I used to give Rose practical illustrations of the speed with which I would chase them, and the manner in which I would effect their capture, supposing I were the lover. I thought of this that afternoon, as, spent and breathless, I paused to catch a last glimpse of the herd as they climbed out of the "draw" into which I had pursued them, and disappeared in a dense growth of quaking aspen. "That fellow may chase the antelope over the plain, and even catch one," I muttered; "but I'd like to see him corner an elk in these mountains. It's lucky for him that he didn't promise to add one to his menagerie." I looked at my watch. It was four o'clock, and I must be at least six miles from camp. Six miles of rocks and precipices, and the sun already obscured by the clouds, which had marshaled in a mighty host, of which the shadowy vapors we had noticed in the morning had been the well-known and sure forerunners. I couldn't hurry; my feet, no longer winged by excitement, seemed to have grown suddenly heavy and springless, and my gun could not have weighed less than a hundred pounds. However, I stumbled along, hoping to get out of the draw and into the main cañon before nightfall. I judged that I must be getting close to its mouth, and was walking cautiously along a bench or ledge which jutted out from a sheer wall of rock, overhanging a tiny stream, which foamed along, noisy and turbulent, forty or fifty feet below, when, all at once, a cloud seemed to have been dropped down instantly, bodily, by invisible hands; and rocks, stream, trees, and boulders swam for a moment in an indistinguishable chaos of cold clinging mist, which left great clammy drops on every shrub and spear of grass, on the stiff sharp spikes of the spruce and fir trees, and turned the trail on the shelving edge of a precipice into a pathway too dangerous for any feet to tread, save those of a goat, or perhaps an elk. My eyes soon accustomed themselves to the illusions of the mist, and it no longer seemed as though the trees and bushes were running at me; but I could not see thirty feet ahead or above me.

The wall which rose black and frowning at my side might, for all that I could see, be fifty feet high, or it might reach the stars. I knew that there were trees growing below the ledge, but, when I ventured to peep over, there was not so much as a leaf to be seen—only a misty gulf, from which came the voice of the angry little stream, swelling into a roar in the heavy motionless air. To go on was impossible. I must wait until the cloud lifted, and, if it didn't lift soon, I must make up my mind to pass the night on the edge of the precipice, with the certainty of a snowstorm close at hand. I leaned back against the wall, with a kind of sullen resignation: "Just my everlasting luck. The burros got away because they belong to me, and the elk would have known better than to have shown themselves to anyone but such an infernal fool. They knew I wouldn't think of shooting until they had got out of range." I had stout staff of jack-oak in my hand, and, as I spoke, I gave a spiteful whack! to a little point of rock which stuck out of the granite mass beside me—

When I was a little fellow, my Uncle Harry gave me a copy of the Arabian Nights, much to the disgust of my father, who did not believe in filling a child's head with such nonsense; but the stories peopled many a solitary hour with gracious and courtly company, or set me longing for a tithe of the riches which came so easily to the fortunate Orientals. I was particularly struck with the story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp. It never had seemed quite a myth to me, and now! Now I held the lamp, or its equivalent, in my hand! The narrow black dismal cañon disappeared as if by magic. Warmth and light, peace, security, and love were mine, mine, mine!

Gone the bitter years of poverty, privation, and disappointment. Life lay before me radiant, triumphant!

In an ecstasy, a delirium of joy, I shouted, hallooed, and could hardly refrain from dancing on a footing so insecure that the slightest misstep would have sent me headlong into the gulf below. It was this knowledge alone which served to keep me somewhere within bounds. I kept remonstrating with myself, much as though I were talking to an unreasonable second party: "Come now, do be quiet. There's no use in acting like a lunatic; be quiet, or you'll never get out of this place alive," while I stood holding in my hand the bit of rock I had knocked off, and trembling with excitement, for the queer little knob which I had struck at in a fit of petulance was fully one-half virgin gold—

not in indistinct half-invisible flecks here and there, but in a continuous irregular streak, yellow, glittering, priceless!

When I had grown calm enough to trust myself, I looked carefully up and down the wall, and I found a vein composed of a kind of black conglomerate, nearly a foot in width, which seemed to be laid into a perpendicular rift in the rock; it extended upward as far as I could see in the gloom, and downward until hidden by the shelf upon which I stood, and the black rift shone and sparkled with its millions of golden points and prisms. The rock was very friable, and I easily dug out several large pieces with my pocket-knife. I might have stood there until the darkness fell, but a soft cool touch on my face aroused me. Snow was falling in large soft infrequent flakes, lazily and indifferently, as though there was no need of haste; but I knew that these were only the advance couriers of one of those wintry tempests which so often sweep down upon the mountains, even in October. The mist was lifting, too, and giving place to a soft white light, the benediction of the dying day, before it should be swallowed up in the tempestuous fast-coming night. I knew that my life depended upon my making the most of this light. Hastily thrusting the specimens into my pockets, I only paused long enough to mark the location as accurately as possible, chiefly by means of an enormous silver-blue spruce, which towered in a stately pyramid directly beneath the shelf upon which I stood, and then I hurried away. A few rods brought me to the main cañon, as I had thought they would, and I was walking along a fairly good trail by the time the snow came down thick and fast; but darkness was coming, too, and, as the chill twilight grew deeper, I began to grope my way cautiously, pausing now and then to listen for the voice of the stream, whose course I must follow up. In one of these pauses, I suddenly heard a long-drawn wailing cry, and knew that a mountain lion was on my track. It was rather blood-curdling to hear the silence broken by such a sound, and I took the precaution of bringing my rifle from shoulder to hand, and half-cocking it; but, after the first shock, I was not greatly alarmed. These lions are cowardly brutes, even when hard-pressed by hunger, and it was too early in the season for them to be suffering from that to any great extent. The recollection of my find soon raised my spirits again, and even when a second, and then a third, lion took up the weird concert, I only shouted jubilantly: "Come on, old boys; bring

on your sisters and your cousins and your aunts, and we'll all take tea!" But, when a fourth and fifth swelled the discordant chorus, and then as suddenly became silent, I realized that the situation was serious. I listened intently; soon I heard a stealthy footfall behind me, then the sharp snapping of a dry twig close by my side—they were surrounding me with the stealthy caution of cats. The ground was now tolerably level—I had gained the river-bottom—and I broke into a run, firing my gun into the air as I did so; if it had not been for that, they would probably have sprung upon me the instant that I quickened my pace. But the loud report and the burst of flame frightened them, and they fell back, snarling and growling. Soon, however, I heard again the soft pursuing footfalls, and could dimly see dark shadowy forms gliding swiftly among the oak bushes which lined either side of the narrow valley. They will follow anyone in this way for miles, waiting for a chance to take him unaware. If I had stumbled and fallen, they would have been likely to have finished me in short order. I had on a belt full of cartridges, and I now loaded and fired incessantly, knowing that I must be near camp; nevertheless, there were but two cartridges left in my belt, and my gun-barrel was empty, when I heard an answering report and saw a flash of light a few yards ahead. Tom had heard the firing, and had run out to meet me. We saw no more of my pursuers, and were glad to be rid of them without the risk of shooting; for, though cowardly, they are still very dangerous when wounded.

"I was out looking for you an hour ago," said Tom, as we entered the tent, "and then the snow began coming down so fast that I was afraid to go far from the tent, lest neither of us should be able to find it again, especially if the fire should go out. But I found the burros hours ago."

"The burros? Oh, yes! I remember."

Tom looked at me so fixedly that I hastened to explain: "It's a fact, Tom; I actually forgot all about them, and so will you when I tell you, Tom. The fortune's come we've waited for s-o-o l-o-o-ong! And we're a milli-o-o-naire!"

I never was much of a singer; but Tom is, and I couldn't blame him for picking up a stout stick, and standing resolutely on the defensive, as I roared out this glad refrain. "Don't kill me, Tom; I won't sing another note—"

"You haven't sung one yet."

"No? Well, I won't howl, then. Now listen, Thomas."

Tom was a gay light-hearted fellow, always singing and joking, and I expected an extravagant outburst; but he heard my story very soberly; he drew a long relieved kind of sigh when I showed him the specimens I had brought. He knew enough of ores to understand fully their value, but he persistently refrained from making any comments until I had had my supper. "You may not know it," he observed, standing with the frying-pan in one hand, and the coffee-pot in the other, "and I presume it would be asking too much of you to expect you to; but you are half-dead with hunger, fatigue, and excitement."

"Hunger? I took a lunch with me!"

"Yes. I noticed it in your pocket, just now. Here it is."

"Well, I suppose I'm hungry if you say so, but I'm not excited."

"Evidently not—call it elevated, if you'd rather; but, if you don't calm down and get rested, how are we to find the place in the morning?"

After supper, I said coaxingly: "Now you talk, Tom, and let my worn spirit revel in the music of your speech!"

Tom smiled rather sadly, but he complied. You'll find that every fellow that you know, or ever have known, who is resolute to resist temptation, brave and energetic, never shirking duty, and never boasting of duty done, has some strong anchor somewhere which is holding his life level. I had known Tom intimately for two years, and had learned to love him as a loyal, uncomplaining, unselfish comrade; but not until that night, when he thought, poor fellow, that our long disappointing search was over, did I hear the story of the orphan girl, away back in Maine, who acted as dining-room girl at a popular seaside resort during summer, and taught school through the long cold New England winters—doing what her hands found to do, and waiting patiently and hopefully for Tom to make the rich strike which he felt so sure of.

While Tom told me the story in a low earnest voice, I understood what his anchor had been. But then, he never was one of the sort to succumb to the coarse allurements which generally prove fatal to the average miner.

Of course, we couldn't either of us sleep, and, as soon as it began to grow light, we were astir. It had snowed nearly all night, but came off clear and bright as the sun rose, and we started briskly down the valley, carrying picks, spades, and a couple of stout sacks; our plan being to take out fifty pounds or so of the ore, and take it down to the smelter as a sample.

Everything looked different, vastly different, under the bright morning sunlight, and covered with a soft unbroken mantle of snow, from what it did in the gloomy dusk of the previous evening; but I felt sure of finding the side canon, or draw, wherein our fortunes awaited us. We tramped on in silence for a couple of miles, and then began to peer into the openings along the right side of the cañon. As we went on, Tom began to look anxious.

"Are you sure you can find it, Arthur?" he asked, after we had returned from a brief examination of the fourth draw which we had thought it worth while to penetrate.

"Oh, yes, we can't miss it. I don't think we have come far enough down yet."

"But, you know, the distance would seem greater to you at night, and in danger, as you were, than it really is."

"Yes, but I ran last night. I assure you it is further down."

If it was further down, we never found it. We hunted until noon, and then we sat down on a dripping ledge—for the snow was melting rapidly—ate our lunch, and tried again. How often we picked our way cautiously into one of those infamous "draws," looking for my chief landmark, the silver-blue spruce on the right-hand side, close under the ledge, with the narrow shelving rock standing high above it! How many times the silvery glittering foliage tempted us on, until we would find the tree on the wrong side of the draw, or, if on the right side, there would be no ledge in sight!

Well, we went back to camp, and we made up our minds to find that spot once more, or spend the winter trying; and we spent it trying. When, after two weeks of fruitless searching, we found that it was likely to prove a long job, we concluded to get ready for it. We built a rough log-cabin, plastered with mud for warmth, a shed for the burros, got up a quantity of fuel for our fireplace, and then took the pack-train down to the city, and brought it back loaded with our winter's supply of provisions. We resolved to stay in the San Carlos Cañon until we found our treasure-trove. But the snow came on so heavily, and continued with so little thawing, that we didn't hunt much that first winter, after all. In the spring, we began in desperate earnest, resolved to have everything in good running order by the time summer opened. For we were still sure of finding the mine. How could we help finding it, if it was not, indeed, a vision of the misty twilight? And that it was not, we still had the samples of ore to prove. But the spring passed, summer

came and went, and we grew used to the continual disappointment, and made grim jokes on the probability of our living long enough to complete the search. Still, neither of us had any idea of abandoning it, until, one day, Tom came back to camp with a telegram which he had found awaiting him at the rough little post-office, where we went once a week for our mail, saying that Lizzie was very sick, and urging his immediate return. He went, and I stayed on alone. He soon wrote back, saying that Lizzie was improving, but he thought it best to stay with her. She quite recovered, and they were married in a few weeks. I never begrimed her her husband, yet I sometimes wished that she could know how I missed him. I had become so accustomed to his cheery presence, that it was lonesome business doing without him. But I kept on with my work.

And so the weary weeks came and went, came and went. You wouldn't believe unless you had a practical demonstration of it, as I had, the innumerable crooks and turns, the baffling hide-and-seek corners, that the mountains hold.

At length there came a big storm, and the snow lay so deep that I did nothing for two weeks; then, one bright morning, a west-wind sprang up, soft and warm, and the snow, deep as it was, seemed to turn into crystal rivulets as if by magic: for, you see, away up in the mountains, the melting snow is not turned into dirty disreputable slush as in lower altitudes, but runs off clear and sparkling. There is nothing to soil it, and it goes away as clean as it came down; within two or three days, the ground was quite bare except for some heavy drifts upon the northern slopes; but they did not count, as many of them would stay all summer, anyway. So I took my pick and started out once more; but I had never felt just as I did that morning, since my search began. I had been brooding over home-affairs so long, that I was saddened, but no longer sullen or resentful—and I had been both. My mind was full of my poor old father and mother—of their simple unquestioning faith. I remembered how my father used to ask for heavenly guidance and instruction. "A very good thing to do, too," I said aloud, musingly. I had not thought much about that phase of my father's character before, and I stood still, recalling instances wherein he had been "directed," as he called it, idly pushing the damp pine-needles with the toe of my worn boot, and wishing that I might be directed too.

I was standing in the San Carlos Cañon, just opposite the opening to the draw which Tom and I had first explored on that black

day, three years before. I had never entered it since; but now a little cluster of falling shingle caused me to look in that direction—a black squirrel was running swiftly along the broken face of the cliff which guarded the entrance. I whistled sharply, and the little fellow stopped abruptly, facing about, with his body bent forward, his tasseled ears cocked up, and his tiny paws folded one upon another, in an attitude which looked so like one of polite remonstrance that I laughed; that startled him again, and he scampered off up the draw—regardless, this time, of my whistling.

In the irresolution and uncertainty of my quest, even so slight an incident as this was enough to decide me, so I said cheerfully, to the fugitive:

"We'll keep each other company, my little friend. I'll go up there too."

The silver-blue spruce still stood below the cliff, silent and majestic as it had stood three years before, and may stand for a hundred years to come; but the stream was swollen by the melting snow, and roared loudly as it rushed over its rocky bed. There was a good trail beside it, and I walked along close by the foot of the cliff, glancing up its sheer face, and sighing as I thought of the disappointment it had given Tom and me that day; but I soon passed it. A few rods more, and the trail, which led upward, made a turn—slight, yet enough to cut off the view behind me and to reveal—

Rose, who has constituted herself my chief critic again, just as of old, said, when I told her that part of my story:

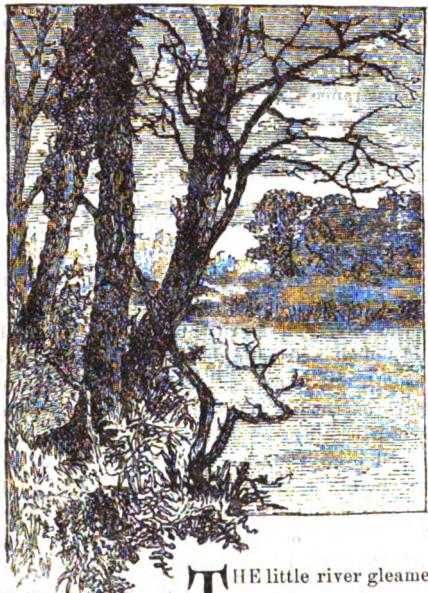
"Don't you think, Arthur, that it was really too absurd of you to faint away when you did actually find the mine? All alone, as you were, too!"

I have never tried to excuse my action—or inaction—to Rose; but, considering all that had gone before, in my own heart I regard it as rather creditable than otherwise. Mother says that the beautiful house that was built last summer on the old place is too fine for her: but father smiles as he tells her "There's no house too fine to stand guard over the old acres, Susan, and nothing on earth too good for my dear old wife."

Tom said that he had no legal right to a share in our great fortune, since he neither found nor lost it, but he has always seemed like a brother to me, and I prevailed upon him to admit the moral right. At last we are a happy united family, none the less so that I have ceased to argue with father when he talks about being "directed."

KEPT TO THE LETTER.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.



THE little river gleamed in the spring sunlight, the shadows of the over-hanging boughs marking it, here and there, with black traceries that looked like delicate etchings on a silver belt.

Douglas Bernard gave a strong pull, which sent the bow of the skiff up on the bank under the trees. He proceeded to help his companion out; she managed to slip, and he with difficulty saved her from falling, a mischance at which the foolish young pair laughed from sheer light-heartedness.

Then they mounted the easy sloping hill, on whose brink a knot of sycamores stood like sentinels guarding the entrance to the wood which spread away westward.

"It is too delightful here to go any further," Bride said, and seated herself in the shade, with her back against a mossy stump. "What a lovely sky—what a perfect day it is altogether."

"If it were not my last!" Douglas rejoined, dolefully.

"The last of your life, one might think, from your dismal tone," Bride said, with a tantalizing laugh.

(448)

"I may not be able to come again before autumn—that seems an eternity to me, though it may not look very long to you," Bernard answered, reproachfully.

"That's as unjust as possible—a real man's speech!" Bride exclaimed. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself—at all events, you must say you are! I believe in the discipline of our grandmothers; they always punished naughty boys who would not own they were penitent."

"You are always punishing me, and I am always on the stool of penitence—half the time I don't know why," the young man declared.

"And, talking of grandmothers," Bride continued, "I am sure yours thinks you ought to be spending these last hours with her, instead of wandering about in the society of the most ineligible young woman of your acquaintance in all this neighborhood."

"What do you mean by talking such nonsense—"

"It is good sound sense on the stately old lady's part," Bride interrupted. "You needn't color so furiously—I know she has called me so, often and often! I don't mind—I like her! She's as witty and clever as possible; she is worldly and hard, and so shall we be, at her age!"

"Now, Bride!"

"I am ineligible," the girl continued, lifting an admonitory finger. "My grandfather was a spendthrift—my father followed his example, and my brother, though he is the dearest fellow in the world, has no business talent, and will never succeed in righting matters in the least."

"That has nothing to do with me and my love for you!" cried Bernard, sturdily.

"No, but it has with the grandmother's judgment of matters."

"I am not dependent on her—"

"Now, don't finish that sentence—it will do you no credit whatever!" cried Bride.

"Besides, everybody is dependent on everybody—and you owe her affection and respect, for she adores you!"

"I do love her, but I'm my own master!"

"Oh, you shabby fellow—just because she has only a life-right in the Bernard money!"

Douglas uttered a prolonged sound between a groan and a stifled yell, and started to his feet.

"You're the wickedest girl that ever lived!" he ejaculated.

"There, there—don't shout—you'll scare the birds! And you know I didn't mean it—and I forgive you, so let's talk about something else," Bride responded, all in one breath, putting her fingers to her ears, and treating her unfortunate admirer to another bewildering smile of mingled sweetness and malice.

"Oh, Bride, don't tease me to-day, of all days in the year!" he cried. "I love you so dearly, and you do care for me a little—you do—only admit that, and—"

"You will instantly grow more unreasonable and impossible to manage than ever," she interposed, quickly.

But her eyes fell under the earnestness of his, and the roses which bloomed suddenly in her cheeks were an admission that could not be retracted. She began playing with the leaves and flowers which lay in her lap, lifting them one after another for a close and critical examination.

"Ah, Bride, you will promise—you will consent to an engagement—you won't send me away in doubt and discouragement!" Bernard pleaded.

"I don't think you are in any doubt, and you are too obstinate ever to be discouraged," she answered, but her voice trembled in spite of her laughing words. "Now, let my hands alone, and please stay where you are. I can talk ever so much easier, since—since we must say it all out."

Bernard stopped short, and stood with his shoulders against the trunks of the two nearest trees, the space between them letting in a patch of sky as a background to his tall figure. He thrust his hands deep into his coat-pockets, afraid lest they should seize her in spite of his will, and remained gazing down at her with a sweetness and entreaty which softened his dark face like sunshine. Bride, glancing half shyly up, caught the look, and her eyes grew misty with feeling which would have its way.

"Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!" she sang, softly, the line from the pathetic old song bursting involuntarily from her lips. "Yee—yes—I care so much that I—no, stop where you are, else I'll take back every word! Now, I want to be sensible; I don't believe your grandmother will like it—"

"She shall come herself and beg you!" he broke in, eagerly.

"Oh, I've no doubt you could wheedle and threaten her into doing anything," Bride said. "All the same, she wants you to marry her

relative, Rose Leighton, that handsome New York girl! And what would my brother do without me—and I have the plantation on my hands beside, and—"

"Your hands are too full, then," said Bernard, "and all your objections amount to nothing. Oh, Bride, you can't go back—you have promised at last!"

Out of the pockets flew his two hands, and Bride was fairly lifted off her feet in an embrace which, for a few seconds, prevented her speaking; and, when she did manage to push his head back, he began talking too eagerly and too sweetly for her to be able to deny or even protest.

Of course, young Mr. Bernard had his way, since Bride's heart fought on his side; and, when they went down the hill, no two human beings could have asked to be happier or have had a brighter dreamland in which to enjoy their bliss.

They took the path which wound along the margin of the little river that shone in the brightness of the gathering sunset and sang a soft refrain to their talk.

Presently, they crossed a stile and reached the orchard which made the boundary-line on that side of the home Bride had inherited. The estate had once been among the largest in that part of Virginia, but by degrees had shrunk in the wasteful hands of several generations of spendthrift Avelins until only a few score of acres and the great rambling brick mansion, sadly out of repair, were all that remained.

At the gate, Bride sent Douglas away; and he went without much demur, because he knew that so doing would enable him to return the sooner.

Before the moon was fairly up over the hills, Bernard's step roused Bride as she sat dreaming in the vine-wreathed verandah.

"You startled me!" she said.

"Don't say you were not expecting me, because that would be a fib," cried Douglas. "And somebody is expecting you. The grandmother wants to see you at once, and she begs you to excuse her, asking you to come to her instead of her coming to you. Indeed, Bride, even you would have been satisfied with the way the blessed old lady received my news. And you'll go—won't you?"

"Certainly I will," Bride answered. "It was good of her not to feel disappointed—or not to show it."

"Now, don't be wicked and go fancying things," he pleaded.

"I can't help being wicked," Bride replied; "but I'll believe exactly what the grandmother says, because it will make me happier—and you too, you spoiled boy."

They walked across the fields through the moonlight, and, as they passed up to the house, they could see Mrs. Bernard in the piazza.

"Welcome, the pair of you!" she called, as the two ascended the stone steps. "Come here, my new granddaughter, and let me give you a kiss. Douglas seems to think you regard me as the wolf in disguise; but I don't credit a word of it, my dear. He only wants to prejudice us against each other, in the hope it will make us both the fonder of him."

Disappointed Mrs. Bernard certainly was—angry, too—but she was a sensible woman; and, recognizing the fact that Douglas would have his own way, she prepared to put a good face on the matter. Personally, she was attached to Bride, though she did not like the Avenal blood; and, besides, she had chosen another wife for her grandson; so, as she never did anything by halves, she made Bride feel welcome.

The evening passed pleasantly, and, when Bride had bidden her good-night, the old lady sat alone and reviewed the situation, accepting it even inwardly with a tolerable grace, though she could not resist thinking:

"If something should happen to prevent the marriage, I couldn't be sorry! But the boy will have his way, and Bride is a good girl in spite of her faults—and she's not to blame for being an Avenal! All the same, if something should happen! Somehow, I can't fancy her ruling here when I am gone—but it is always the unlikely that comes to pass!"

The next morning, Bernard started North to attend to the business affairs which the death of an uncle had left on his hands. Even in her loneliness, Bride was able to be happy, for nearly every day brought her a letter from Douglas, and the stately grand dame was kindness itself.

But, before a month went by, Mrs. Bernard had reason to recall the old saying she had quoted to herself on the evening when Douglas had announced his engagement: "It is always the unlikely that comes to pass!" Again she whispered the words, over and over, with mingled pain and exultation. She was heartsore for Bride and Douglas, yet she could not help feeling that Providence had wisely and visibly interfered in her boy's behalf.

II.

It was at the close of a lovely summer day; Bride had just seated herself on the verandah.

The new moon was in the east—a pale amber light on all objects—the scent of roses in the air—in Bride's hand the letter, that day received from Douglas, which was to be read again a little later.

The clanging of the gate roused her from her dream; up the avenue came Crumb, the colored boy, who had been down to the village to do some errands.

"I done bring you another letter, Miss Bride," he said, as he got near enough to see her. "Miss Robarts, she hailed me jis as I was gwine by de post-office. 'Here's a letter for Miss Bride,' says she, 'and don' yer lose it'—as if I ever did!"

His mistress bore testimony to his carefulness, which sent him off happy, and then she went indoors. The lamp had been lighted in the parlor; as she entered, she glanced at the superscription on the envelope—it was in her brother's writing.

During the last year, Gerard Avenal had been in Richmond, having secured a place in an insurance company, through the influence of the president, an old friend of his family. Bride could manage the farm much better than her brother had ever done, and she had urged his acceptance of the position.

Gerard Avenal was a weak, soft-hearted, unconsciously selfish man, who had always made a failure of everything he had undertaken. He possessed no more ability to reason and plan for the future than a savage: and, from the time she was thirteen, Bride had managed all business matters as much as she did now at twentytwo.

She opened Gerard's letter, and read it to the end without raising her eyes or uttering a sound, though the first lines warned her that he was menaced by a trouble so black, that, even if the worst of its consequences could be averted, an indelible shadow would remain, so deep and wide that its darkness must shroud her life as well as his own.

Before bed-time, her preparations were complete for an absence of two days, perhaps more.

At noon, an express-train halted for water at the village station, and, by taking that, she could reach Richmond before evening.

She had telegraphed to her brother that she was coming. He did not meet her at the station; when she reached the hotel, she found a note, asking her to come to him—he had been so ill all day that he could not get out.

She went at once to the house, and found him lying on his bed, partly dressed, looking terribly worn and wretched. He received her with a burst of womanish tears, and had to be soothed into composure; but Bride had been accustomed

from her earliest childhood to pet and hold him, and even to promise that the affair should be up, though he was seven years her senior.

"They're all against me!" he wailed. "I can see even Mr. Burdick thinks I took the money. They will prosecute me, and I shall go to prison—for ten years, maybe. Oh, they'd better hang me outright—it would be more merciful!"

She studied the face, so handsome in spite of its betrayal of weakness, and thought that, whether innocent or guilty, he deserved pity rather than blame—poor sufferer that he was from the follies and sins of bygone generations who had bequeathed to him all their love of pleasure and excitement without the bodily strength and the force of will which had enabled them, though much worse men, to gain and keep a prominent place in their day.

By degrees she got the whole miserable story from him, in a rambling disconnected fashion eminently characteristic of the contradictory half-made creature. He had succeeded for nearly a year in keeping very steady; but, about a week previous, some former boon companions chanced to visit Richmond, and found him out. Supper and cards had been the result, followed by some days of drinking, during which he managed to present himself at the office and avoid the recognition of his state by the leading members of the firm. An express-package, containing a thousand dollars, was missing; it must have been received by him, but he could not account for it; and he was known to have just paid a gambling-debt of some hundred dollars. He told several contradictory stories about the way he received this money: the truth was, it belonged to Bride, and he had drawn it out to pay the interest on a mortgage. It was a sum lately left her by a relative, and she had written to him to devote it to that purpose, believing she could trust him to do it, and so save herself the journey.

As usual, he had to be comforted instead of blamed. Bride did not accept this condition of matters from weakness—she did it to avert worse suffering and shame. She knew that unless she could help Gerard to face the present strait, he would begin to drink again, and, in the partial insanity which it always engendered in him, would make an attempt at suicide, as he had done twice before when in that state.

She left him to go to Mr. Burdick, and, for her sake, that gentleman consented to interest himself in Gerard's behalf. The result of the matter was that Mr. Burdick made good the money-loss; and his solicitations, added to Bride's eloquent entreaties, induced the board of managers to renounce a criminal prosecution,

hushed up.

But the latter was beyond their power; hints of the wretched business had already crept into the papers; and, when Bride took her brother home, the next day, she knew that the cloud of suspicion resting on him would cast over her own life a shadow so black that her dreams, her hopes, her happiness, must be blotted out in an eternal eclipse.

She wasted no time in passive misery—she should have years and years in which to suffer: what she had to do now was to act.

The night of her return, she wrote to Douglas Bernard, breaking her engagement; then she wrote another letter, almost as hard to frame. A man in Baltimore, who had bought a large tract of land in the neighborhood, had tried to purchase her plantation. She had refused the proposition, thinking that nothing would ever induce her to part with her childhood's home; but she wrote now to accept, if he were still inclined to hold to his former offer and pay down the full purchase-money on the transferal of the deed.

Gerard's wretched condition, both of body and mind, required constant attention, and Bride had her hands and mind so full that the claims of her heart had to wait.

"Time enough to suffer—time enough," she told herself over and over.

Mrs. Bernard was absent from home, and did not return until Bride had been able to decide fully on her future plans; for she had received a telegram accepting her proposal in regard to the sale of the plantation.

Bride heard, one evening, that Mrs. Bernard had returned, and, the next morning, came a note asking to see her. The note was kind enough, but it stated that the writer had been much troubled by a painful report—she wanted Bride to come and tell her it was not true.

Bride, of course, understood what the report was which had disturbed Mrs. Bernard. Within an hour, she presented herself before that lady, who received her with an appearance of carefully-repressed emotion which would have affected Bride more had she not been certain it was a fine bit of acting.

"My dear, dear child!" cried the old lady. "How good of you to come! And now tell me at once that I have been needlessly anxious—there is no truth in this dreadful tale. Some enemy has set it in circulation! Your brother could not—"

"Please tell me exactly what you heard," Bride interrupted, quietly, "then I can answer."

"That—that Mr. Avenal had had a difficulty with the Richmond Company; that—" Here the speaker paused; but, at an impatient gesture from Bride, she continued: "Well, dear, it has to be said: the report was that he had been accused of appropriating money, would be prosecuted—"

"No, he will not," Bride again interrupted. "The rest of the story is true—quite true."

Mrs. Bernard groaned, and put her hand before her face as she sank back in her chair.

"My poor, poor Douglas!" she sighed. "I had not the heart to write until—oh, I hoped you could assure me there would be no need!"

"I have written," Bride said, calmly. "Mrs. Bernard, I released your grandson from his engagement."

"My brave girl—upright and truthful always!" cried the old lady, rising and holding out her arms, into which, however, Bride showed no inclination to precipitate herself. "But he will never let you go—he is so headstrong, and young people will not understand that the wild passion of early youth is very seldom the love which lasts."

"Mrs. Bernard," rejoined Bride, "you need have no fear—I never break my word—I have vowed not to marry your grandson while I and mine rest under this cloud."

Her listener was convinced, and, with her mind at ease, her kindness and generosity, of which she had a large share, could assert themselves. When she and Bride parted, she had never felt such genuine fondness for the girl, whose firmness and courage filled her with respect.

Two days elapsed before Douglas Bernard arrived to trouble Bride by his suffering, but her determination was not to be shaken.

"I have made a vow," she said, "and it shall be kept to the letter."

"So shall mine," he answered; "it is never to rest until the truth is discovered! I have talked with Gerard—I am sure he never took the money."

Bride could not share this confidence, though she believed that her brother did not remember taking the package. She was convinced, too, that he would never have committed the crime except under the temporary insanity which excessive drinking always produced in him, and these palliating circumstances kept her affection and sympathy from being blotted out by anger and contempt.

Her certainty that Gerard never could be freed from the stain which shadowed his reputation was the key-note of her resolution to

separate herself irrevocably from Douglas Bernard.

"I am acting rightly," she said; "all you can do is to make my task as easy as possible. Go away—leave me free to get ready to face my new life. I don't want to talk—I don't want you to write—I don't mean to leave address or trace behind! Of course, we can't disappear utterly—but you must promise not to hunt us up—it would avail nothing—I shall never change."

Douglas at last became convinced that it was useless to attempt to shake Bride's decision—he could only offer his misery, the hope that somewhere in the future the crooked path might be set straight.

III.

"AND that is the important matter I wanted to talk to you about, Bride Avenal—I have made up my mind to marry your brother! I chose to tell you myself, instead of letting him. You know, I'm fond of managing things and people."

The color deepened to a painful flush in Bride's cheeks, then died suddenly out, leaving her very pale.

"I—I am taken by surprise, Mrs. Henderson," she began, but the lady interrupted her without scruple.

"Then you must be blind!" she cried. "Why, it would have been plain to anybody, I should think, that I liked Gerard! Good gracious, you don't mean to say you object?"

"No, no! I am more than glad, for my brother's sake, but—but—Oh, Mrs. Henderson, has he been perfectly frank?" Bride asked, breathlessly. "Has he told you everything about—about himself?"

"Mercy on us, child, I should hate to have any man do that!" the handsome widow said, with a merry laugh. "But, if you mean about that wretched insurance company business, yes—long ago—I got it out of him soon after we made acquaintance."

"Oh, I am so glad!" Bride rejoined, face and voice full of relief. "Now I can tell you that your news makes me very, very happy!"

"That's enough!" said the widow, kissing her cheek. "I am sure we shall get along—I'm awfully fond of Gerard. In the first place, I don't believe he ever took the money. As for the suspicion, nobody here knows about it; and, anyhow, most of the nice men in this region have something worse on their record than such a trifle. You see, I was born in this part of the world, and I've lived in it thirtytwo

years, and things which might seem important in your eyes don't affect me in the least. I shall expect you to like me! You can get on without Gerard—so far as managing the ranch goes, he is of no use whatever—you see, he was born for ornament, as some people are for work."

"Of course, I like you," Bride averred, truthfully; "and Gerard is as kind-hearted as he is good-natured. He is clever, too, only he does need taking care of—but you have head enough for both."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Henderson, complacently. "If he should misbehave, I'd box his ears and put him to bed! I like something to pet; I'm a rich woman, and I can afford a husband who is rather helpless! I think that was Gerard's charm for me from the first! I've always been surrounded by such big coarse men! Now, there's a touch of the feminine element in Gerard which suits me, because I've a little taint of masculinity in my nature."

It was quite true, yet Mrs. Henderson was a very attractive woman, well-educated and handsome, and so bright and witty that one could easily overlook her freedom of speech and little eccentricities of manner.

The sheep-farm Bride had purchased was situated in one of the loveliest valleys which even that region of marvels, Southern California, can boast, and Mrs. Henderson's home was in a town only a few miles distant.

Two years had passed since Bride brought her brother to the quaint old house set down in the midst of trees and flowers, and began her new life. Matters had prospered sufficiently, so that she had no anxiety for the future, where material prospects were concerned, and she had too much on her hands to have leisure for repining and regret.

With the assistance of a skilled ranchman, Bride had from the first managed matters herself, and Gerard found as much occupation as he cared for in keeping the books, and giving such help, here and there, as Bride needed. His terrible experience seemed to have completely cured him of the vice of gambling, and, though he drank sometimes, he was never guilty of any excess. From the outset, Bride made him comprehend that there was a limit to her forbearance, and he accepted the condition without a struggle.

It was only about nine months since, that Gerard had become acquainted with Mrs. Henderson. He had known her for a good while before she and his sister met, and, though she often drove or rode out to the ranch, and occasionally made visits of several days,

it was only lately that it had occurred to Bride, the frank determined widow might be persuaded to accept Gerard if he should ever happen to stray into asking her—Gerard never did anything from a fixed resolution.

Now, the consummation had come about, and it speedily seemed the most natural result in the world, as agreeable things so soon do to us all. Sometimes, when rejoicing over the future, and feeling that a great weight of responsibility was removed from her own shoulders, Bride could not help reflecting on the inexplicable manner in which human destinies are arranged. It certainly seemed odd that the cloud cast over her path by her brother should have interfered so little with his happiness, while it had been permitted to wreck hers. But Bride had long since learned that it is a waste of time to brood over such mysteries. She had learned, too, that it was wise to cling as much as possible to optimistic theories, in order to counterbalance the pessimistic facts of existence; and, by consistently acting on this principle, she made life's daily road pleasanter for all who trod it in her company, and, therefore, easier for herself.

Gerard Avenal's good fortune in winning the rich handsome widow was speedily followed by a new ray of sunshine, which he received with a placid composure that caused Bride a little exasperated wonder, while it mightily amused his promised wife.

A fortnight before the date fixed for the wedding, Bride received a communication from Mr. Burdick, informing her that Gerard's innocence was thoroughly established. The real culprit had been caught in an attempt at embezzlement, and, as he had acted as assistant book-keeper when Avenal was accused, it had seemed probable that he might be the guilty person in that affair, though, at the time, no suspicion pointed to him. He was given the hope that a full confession would tend to a mitigation of the sentence which must inevitably follow his trial, and, under this pressure, he admitted that he had taken advantage of Avenal's fit of intoxication to steal the express-package.

The joyful news came late one afternoon, and Avenal rode at once into town to impart it to his betrothed. Bride spent her solitary evening in writing to Douglas Bernard, for the first time since they parted. She had heard often from him, but the epistles had gradually grown less frequent, and during the past few months no tidings had reached her.

Her letter was friendly and frank; but it contained no word which could sting her to

remember, in case his feeling had changed and the old dream had lost its sweetness. She did not allow herself to think definitely or to form any distinct hope—at least she told her reason so—but the whole world seemed suddenly to have brightened, and she felt a pleasure in the mere fact of existence to which she had long been a stranger.

The next day, Mrs. Henderson drove over to the ranch, her usual high spirits augmented ten-fold by the joyful intelligence in regard to her lover.

"I knew the truth would come out sometime—I said so when Gerard told me the story—now didn't I, young man?" she demanded, glancing triumphantly from Bride to her brother.

"Of course, you did," Gerard answered, with a look as full of admiration as if the discovery of the facts had been her work.

"Then always remember that I have the gift of prophecy, and show me respect accordingly!" cried the widow. "You see, Bride, I know how to claim my rights and dues, which is more, I fancy, than you'll ever learn, clear-headed as you are."

The three spent several very happy hours together, and, when Mrs. Henderson declared that she must drive home before dark, Bride left the lovers seated in the verandah, and went up to her own room for some letters which she wanted Gerard to post.

She took the epistles from her writing-desk—stopped to look at the direction on the envelope which bore Bernard's name. She pressed the paper to her lips, and, catching sight of her own image in the glass, blushed as hotly as if she had been surprised by a stranger in her bit of girlish folly. The words of the old song recurred to her—the sweet words which for so long she had not trusted herself to recall: "Douglas, Douglas, tender and true," she sang, softly, and went downstairs, still murmuring the refrain.

The pony-carriage was ready; Mrs. Henderson and Gerard were still seated in the verandah; he was reading aloud bits from some Eastern journals which Mrs. Henderson had brought.

Just as Bride reached the lower hall, she heard Gerard exclaim:

"By Jove, here's news!"

"Douglas, Douglas, tender and true," Bride sang below her breath, as she passed on toward the outer doors, holding her letters in her hand. She heard her brother's exclamation, and asked as she reached the verandah: "What other news have you, Gerard?"

"Oh, just listen to this!" he said. "Where is it now? I've lost the place—it's about Douglas Bernard."

"You need spectacles," Mrs. Henderson interrupted, and Bride had to wait while Gerard hunted for the column he wanted, and the widow kept up a fire of raillery.

"Ah, here it is!" he cried, exultantly. "Listen, Bride—he was rather an admirer of hers once, Elsie."

"Will you read, or let me?" Bride asked, quietly.

Mrs. Henderson shot her a quick glance, but Gerard noticed nothing unusual in his sister's voice or manner, and began to read with great emphasis:

"Among the weddings announced for the autumn, that of Mr. Douglas Bernard and Miss Rose Leighton is attracting—"

He read on through a paragraph of considerable length, but Bride caught no other word as she stood motionless in the doorway, with the red glow of the setting sun striking full on her face. Mrs. Henderson gave her another covert glance, then snatched the paper from Gerard, declaring that she must start at once.

She made a great commotion, and kept her escort occupied; not a word to the sister did she utter beyond an affectionate farewell, but she felt that Bride's cheek was like ice as her lips touched it, and her woman's intuition told her at least something of the truth.

Bride kept her stand till the pony-carriage and the attendant horseman turned into the high-road, then she descended the steps, and began to walk to and fro along a path which ran by the side of the house and down the hill at the back of the garden. She felt cold and numb; those words Gerard had read were still ringing in her ear—the death-knell of her youth! She knew now that her hope had never died, only lain dormant, and that under the sunshine of yesterday's news it had blossomed into beauty as suddenly as an amaryllis unfolds its leaves.

She perceived that she was still holding the letters; two of them she put in her pocket, and walked slowly on. Presently she came in sight of a fire under a great tree; old Huldah was making soap in a huge kettle, looking like an old witch as she stirred the compound and chanted a tuneless song.

Bride went up to her, examined the soap, listened to Huldah's remarks, then stooped, thrust her letter into the blaze, and watched it consume.

"Soap-making, sheep-raising, house-cleaning—these are the things fate gives me to do,"

she said to herself, as she walked away. "Well, I'll do them as thoroughly as I can! Dreams and hopes and happiness might be pleasanter; but they are for other people—for Gerard and Elsie—for Douglas and Rose Leighton! Life is hard on me, I think—but it is of no use to groan—and it will end sometime—sometime!"

I V.

THE days went by, and one beautiful morning Gerard and the widow were married, and started on a trip to the East, two such happy mortals that it was pleasant to see their faces.

IT was late in the afternoon when Bride reached home—it was a comfort to know she would find herself alone there.

She had been kept busy during the past week, and was really very tired; but she did not on that account allow herself to rest. Proctor, the manager, claimed an interview, and, when he had gone, she held audience with several other persons. After that, there were household operations which Huldah wished her to inspect, and it was growing twilight before she found leisure to seat herself in the verandah.

"I must find more work," she was thinking; "I must fill up my life somehow! I haven't Gerard to think about any longer—I shall need

new interests to occupy the place he held! Well, they will come in good season—duties and responsibilities never fail to do that."

There was a step on the grass; a voice called her name; she looked up, and saw Douglas.

An hour later, they were seated there side by side—the full moon pouring down a flood of enchanted light to illuminate their paradise.

"The two names were correct, but they ought to have been reversed! It is my cousin, Bernard Douglas, who will marry the fair Rose," Douglas had explained. "The grandmother says she only wants now to see us married to have every wish fulfilled."

"And it was you who found out the truth about Gerard—oh, why didn't Mr. Burdick say so?"

"I told him to keep my name back—I wanted to tell my own news! And to think that my letter missed, and the telegram also—you ought to have had that yesterday."

"I have you—which is better," she replied. "Oh, this pays for all—Douglas, Douglas!"

"Say the rest," he pleaded.

So, with her head pillow'd on his breast, she sang softly the refrain:

"Tender and true; Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!"

A GRAVE.

BY LILLA PRICE.

OH, bury me under the soft blue waves,
'Neath the rush of the waters free;
Let me find my rest 'neath their foam-tipp'd crest,
In the depths of the murmuring sea.

No bell shall be toll'd, with its mournful sound,
No funeral-pall shall be spread;
But a solemn hush and a soft sad rush,
As the waters close over my head.

A tangle of seaweed shall be my shroud,
And a mound of coral my bier;

The voice of the sea shall my requiem be,
And my sleep will be tranquil here.

No roses nor lilies may deck my grave,
Nor marble shall mark my rest,
But the wonderful flow'rs of the ocean bow'rs
Will lovingly twine o'er my breast.

Then bury me under "the sad sea waves,"
Where the winds moan soft and low;
Let the tears that are shed for the deep-cover'd dead
With the shimmering wavelets flow.

THE DEWDROP.

BY T. J. TAYLOR.

It nestles 'mid flowers and grasses
In tremulous quiv'ring gleams;
Bathed in the sunlight, it flashes
With ten thousand golden beams.

It looks like a pearl of the ocean,
It looks like a diamond rare,
As it takes the tints of the rainbow
And scatters them through the air.

Like a tiny lake in the mountains,
It lies in slumberous rest,
While the lights and shadows of morning
Mirror themselves in its breast.

It changes its bright sparkling colors
In the blushing light of morn,
Till, caught in the folds of a sunbeam,
It fuses—the dewdrop is gone.